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RECORD-SETTING KENTUCKY DERBY AND OAKS DAYS; STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT OF DAILY RACING AND SPECIAL EVENTS; AND MEMORABLE PERFORMANCES BY GUN RUNNER AND OTHER STARS TOP CHURCHILL DOWNS' 2017 SPRING MEET

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, July 1, 2017) – A dazzling “Downs After Dark” night under the lights at **Churchill Downs Racetrack** on Friday, June 30 brought down the curtain on the historic track’s successful and memorable 38-day **2017 Spring Meet** highlighted by record wagering and enthusiastic attendance despite damp weather for the **Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Grade I)** and **Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI)**; strong support by racing fans, both on-track and across North America for its daily racing and special events; and memorable performances by a roster of equine and human headliners topped by **Gun Runner**, the winner of the **Stephen Foster Handicap Presented by GE Appliances (GI)** and ranked among the top horses in the world.

The highlights of the 143rd Spring Meet that opened on April 29 were topped, as they are each year, by the renewals of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands, won by the favored **Always Dreaming**, and the Longines Kentucky Oaks, won in stretch-running style by **Abel Tasman**. **Winchell Thoroughbreds LLC** and **Three Chimneys Farm’s** Gun Runner lived up to his reputation as one of the world’s top horses with a sizzling performance in **\$500,000 Stephen Foster Handicap (GI)** on June 17.

Other equine stars that sparkled during the meet included **Gunpowder Farm’s Divisidero**, whose victory for trainer **Buff Bradley** in the \$500,000 Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (GI) on Derby Day made him only the third horse to score back-to-back victories in that important turf event; **Maggi Moss’ La Troienne (GI)** winner **Big World**; **Juddmonte Farm’s Paulassilverlining**, winner of the Humana Distaff (GI) for trainer **Chad Brown**; and **Katherine Ball’s Limousine Liberal** and **Carl R. Moore Management’s Finley’sluckycharm**, both of whom earned three stakes victories during the meet.

The brightest human stars during the Spring Meet included a pair of trainers: **Steve Asmussen**, who earned a record-extending 18th title as “Leading Trainer,” and **Dale Romans**, the Louisville native who ended the meet with 699 victories at Churchill Downs – two wins shy of the record for career wins beneath the Twin Spires held by Hall of Fame trainer **Bill Mott**. Spring Meet titles for the top jockey and owner were also won by familiar faces as **Corey Lanerie** scored a comfortable win in the race for leading rider and **Maggi Moss** secured her fourth title as the top owner during a Churchill Downs racing meet.

Three “Downs After Dark” celebrations headed the just-concluded session’s roster of popular special events. The closing night racing session on Friday, June 30 saw 17,582 patrons pass through the track’s admission gates despite a heavy mid-evening thunderstorm that delayed racing for nearly an hour. The meet’s three sessions of racing under the lights attracted total attendance of 59,200 fans. “Twilight Thursday” programs throughout the meet attracted strong weekday crowds for its combination of racing, fare from popular food trucks, live music and drink specials. And a pair of “Family Adventure Days Presented by Kroger” drew eager crowds of young families to a range of activities that included rides, petting zoos, face painting and stick-horse races.

“There have been so many reasons to smile during our just-concluded Spring Meet and our entire Churchill Downs team cherishes and appreciates the entire experience and the support of our patrons and horsemen,” said **Kevin Flanery**, president of Churchill Downs Racetrack. “Despite some uncharacteristically soggy weather during Kentucky Derby Week, racing fans have enthusiastically embraced our Spring Meet racing and special events throughout our 38 days of racing. Our patrons’ overwhelmingly positive response to our latest updates on the second floor of the Clubhouse was very gratifying and we appreciate their ongoing support.

“As always, we deeply appreciate the continued support of Churchill Downs racing by our horsemen. Our owners and trainers based in Kentucky, along with those who shipped to our track from racing centers across North America, joined with us to present a strong racing program topped by a schedule of outstanding stakes races that continues to make Churchill Downs’ racing one of the strongest and most attractive products in American racing.”

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The strong Spring Meet began with a Kentucky Derby Week that was plagued by rain on its signature days, but still established business records. Despite ongoing weather issues, attendance at Churchill Downs on Kentucky Derby Day was 158,070 – the seventh-largest total in its history – and wagering from all-sources set all-time records for both the entire Kentucky Derby Day program and the race itself.

All-sources wagering on the Derby Day program surpassed \$200 million for the first time and totaled \$209.2 million – a jump of 9% from 2016 and an increase of 8% over the previous record of \$194.3 million established in 2015. All-sources wagering on the Derby race rose to \$139.2 million – a 12% increase over 2016 and a 1% increase over the previous record of \$137.9 million established in 2015. The 143rd Kentucky Oaks, with rain all-day, was the coldest Oaks Day since 1940 but still attracted a crowd of 105,100. Despite the soggy weather, all-sources wagering for both the entire Oaks Day racing program and the Kentucky Oaks race were down only slightly from records established in 2016.

The victories in the Kentucky Derby by **Always Dreaming** and the Kentucky Oaks by **Abel Tasman** were the first for their respective owners.

Always Dreaming, a son of 2012 Kentucky Derby runner-up Bodemeister, is owned by the partnership of **MeB Racing, Brooklyn Boyz, Teresa Viola, St. Elias Racing, Siena Farm** and **West Point Thoroughbreds**. Kentucky Oaks winner Abel Tasman is owned by **China Horse Club** and **Clearsky Farms**.

The trainers and jockeys of the Derby and Oaks, however, were familiar faces. Trainer **Todd Pletcher** and jockey **John Velazquez** earned their second career victories in America's greatest race when the 3-year-old Almost Dreaming rolled to his 2 ¾-length victory in the Derby. Abel Tasman's Kentucky Oaks victory was guided by the Hall of Fame team of trainer **Bob Baffert**, who won the Oaks for a third time, and jockey **Mike Smith**, who scored his second win in America's premier race for 3-year-old fillies.

The Derby's winning owners, Pletcher and Velazquez returned to Churchill Downs for the Stephen Foster Handicap "Downs After Dark" program on Saturday, June 17 to receive their engraved winner's trophies for the triumph by Always Dreaming. The owners, headed by partners **Vincent and Teresa Viola** and **Anthony and MaryEllen Bonomo**, accepted the traditional solid gold Kentucky Derby Winner's Trophy, while Pletcher, Velazquez and breeders **Santa Rosa Partners (Gerry Dilger and Mike Ryan)** received their smaller sterling silver replica trophies.

Despite often soggy and chilly weather, business was strong throughout Kentucky Derby Week. All-sources mutuel handle from its April 29 Opening Night celebration through Derby Day rose to a record \$285.1 million, an increase of 7% from the previous record. Attendance over the six days of racing was 349,455, a decrease of 7% from the previous record established in 2016. Churchill Downs' **Thurby** celebration, now **in its third year** and conducted during day-long rain on the Thursday prior to the Oaks and Derby, still attracted 36,140 fans.

Race purses paid during the 38-day meet totaled \$21,264,458, a slight decrease of 0.6% from the 2016 total of \$21,393,096. The 2017 Spring Meet featured 372 races, the same total of races conducted during the same meet a year earlier.

Daily race purses averaged \$559,591 – a decrease of 0.6% from the spring of 2017, but the second-highest daily average in the past five years. The average purse for an individual race during the meet was \$57,163.

The size of the average Spring Meet race field was 8.05 horses, which was flat with the 2016 average field of 8.08 horses. A total of 2,996 horses competed in the meet's 372 races.

Churchill Downs' 20-cent minimum Single 6 Jackpot remained a popular wager for on-track and simulcast patrons. A pool of \$146,754 was carried over into the closing night of the meet and wagering on the closing night Single 6 raised the overall pool to \$762,462. The wager returned \$3,435.98 to each of the patrons who correctly picked the winners in the six-race sequence.

Jockey Corey Lanerie continued his run of excellence at the home of the Kentucky Derby with a comfortable victory in the race for "Leading Jockey" of the Spring Meet. Lanerie, who piloted 58 winners during the meet, has now won 13 of the last 15 meet riding titles at Churchill Downs. Lanerie's total for meet championships trails only the 34 local riding crowns won by Hall of Famer **Pat Day**, the all-time Churchill Downs win-leader. Horses ridden by the 42-year-old Louisiana native included winners of four stakes races and his runner-up finish aboard **L and N Racing LLC's Lookin At Lee** in the Kentucky Derby was his best performance to date in America's greatest race.

The runner-up for leading rider honors was **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, whose total of 47 victories included a five-win day on the June 17 “Downs After Dark” program and a meet-high five stakes victories. **Julien Leparoux** (28 wins) and **Florent Geroux** (26) were next in the final jockey standings, and Geroux matched Hernandez’s stakes total with five, but two of those were Grade I triumphs by Gun Runner in the Stephen Foster and Big World in the La Troienne.

Asmussen raised his record collection of “Leading Trainer” titles to 18 when the Hall of Fame trainer sent 23 horses into the winner’s circle during the 38-day racing session. The victory by Gun Runner in the Stephen Foster Handicap was the highlight of the meet and one of three stakes wins during the session for the 51-year-old Asmussen, who also saddled Lookin At Lee for his runner-up finish in the Kentucky Derby – his best finish to date in the “Run for the Roses.”

Ian Wilkes was second in in the race for top trainer with 20 wins, a total that included a trio of stakes wins headed by a victories by **Marylou Whitney’s Bird Song** in the Alysheba (GII) on Kentucky Oaks Day and **Whitham Thoroughbreds LLC’s McCracken** in the Matt Winn (GIII). **Tom Amoss**, whose meet was headlined by the victory by Big World in the La Troienne, finished third with 18 wins. Romans and **Brad Cox** tied for fourth at 16 victories and **Brendan Walsh** was next with 14.

It was a stellar Spring Meet for **Maggi Moss**, the Iowa-based owner whose horses won 11 races to earn her **fourth** “Leading Owner” crown at Churchill Downs. She also earned her biggest victory at the historic track when Big World led from start-to-finish in the La Troienne (GI) on Kentucky Oaks Day.

Moss edged **Ken and Sarah Ramsey**, the all-time leaders in victories by an owner at Churchill Downs, for the Spring Meet crown. The Ramseys, who had swept all three of the track’s “Leading Owner” titles in 2016, ended the 2017 Spring session with nine winners to raise the Nicholasville, Ky. couple’s win total at the track to 469. Whitham Thoroughbreds LLC and **Rigney Racing LLC** tied for third with six wins each and that duo was followed by a foursome with four wins apiece that included **Brad Kelley’s Calumet Farm**, **Chris Wilkins**, **John C. Oxley** and **Asmussen**.

The trio of respective stakes wins by meet leaders Limousine Liberal and Finley’sluckycharm each included a pair of graded stakes triumphs. The **Ben Colebrook**-trained Limousine Liberal won the Churchill Downs (GII) on Derby Day and the Aristides (GIII) on June 3 before a closing night win in the \$70,000-added Kelly’s Landing Overnight Stakes. Finley’sluckycharm, trained by **Bret Calhoun**, remained unbeaten in six Churchill Downs races with victories in the Winning Colors (GIII), Chicago Handicap (GIII) and Roxelana Overnight Stakes. Both were the track’s first three-time meet stakes winners since **Lunarpal** won the Kentucky Juvenile, Kentucky Breeders’ Cup and Bashford Manor during 2004 Spring Meet.

Winners of Grade II stakes events during the meet included the victory by **Charles Fipke’s** homebred **Forever Unbridled** in the Fleur De Lis (GII); the Wise Dan (GII) victory by **Wimborne Farm’s Kasaqui (ARG)**; the Cox-trained **Benner Island**, who won the Eight Belles (GII) for **Shortleaf Stable**, and **Donegal Racing’s Arklow**, winner of the **American Turf (GII)**; and the Brown-trained **Roca Rojo (IRE)** in the Churchill Distaff Turf Mile (GII).

Trainer **Kenny McPeck** saddled a pair of 2-year-old stakes winners on the June 30 closing night of the meet in **Tommie Lewis’ Ten City** in the Bashford Manor (GIII) and **Normandy Farm’s Sunny Skies** in the **Debutante (Listed)**. He also won the Louisville Handicap (GIII) with **Some In Tieme (BRZ)**.

Business continued to be brisk at the claiming box throughout the Spring Meet as 217 horses were claimed for a total of \$4,254,000. The claims resulted in \$255,240 in tax revenue for the state of Kentucky.

Live racing will return to Churchill Downs with the track’s **September Meet**, which will run from **Sept. 15-Oct. 1**. The track’s Fall Meet is set for **Oct. 29-Nov. 26**.

Churchill Downs, the world’s most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America’s greatest race, the Kentucky Derby, continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN) offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 144th running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands on May 5, 2018. The track will conduct two more live racing meets in 2017: the September Meet from Sept. 15-Oct. 1 and its Fall Meet from Oct. 29-Nov. 26. An eight-time host to the Breeders’ Cup World Championships, Churchill Downs will again be the site of that event on Nov. 2-3, 2018. Information is available at www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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